



FEMA

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Contact:
Mark Wesley – MSP/EMD (517) 333-5023
News Desk – FEMA (517) 324-3393
Frank A. Adinolf – SBA (404) 347-3771

Disaster News

ONLY ONE WAY TO REGISTER FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE

East Lansing, MI - Federal and state officials are warning those who were affected by the recent severe storms to be aware of various fraudulent practices often experienced in the aftermath of disaster.

“We have just have learned that Michigan residents are being contacted by someone guaranteeing assistance payouts in 7-10 days if provided personal information such as Social Security number and bank information along with an ‘application fee’ of \$249.00,” said Federal Coordinating Officer Marianne C. Jackson. “There is no fee required to register for disaster assistance,” she assured. “All it takes is a phone call.”

The only way to register for assistance under the June 30 Presidential disaster declaration following the storms of May 20-24 is to register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). And, the only way to do that is to call FEMA’s toll-free application number – **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**. That application number is available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Those who are speech or hearing impaired can call **TTY 1-800-462-7585**.

FEMA urges disaster victims to beware of bogus offers for help, even from so-called relief agencies, and to be alert to false claims from roofers, driveway pavers, home contractors, needy causes and so-called disaster relief services. People should never give out personal information without verification from the individual on the phone or at the door. Representatives of FEMA and other legitimate disaster relief agencies will be able to provide proof of licensure and proper, verifiable identification.

F/Lt. Ralph J. Hobrat of the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division (MSP/EMDO) urges all Michigan residents with any knowledge of fraud, waste or abuse involving FEMA contracts, programs or personnel to call the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 1-877-765-8388, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Complaints can also be filed online at www.michigan.gov/ag or sent to the Office of Inspector General, FEMA, 500 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20472.

“We can't avoid being victimized by a flood or other natural disaster,” said Hobrat. “But we can - and should - make every effort to avoid being victimized by fraud.”

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On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

